

MOUNT VERNON REGENTS.

WORK OF THE WOMEN WHO CARE FOR WASHINGTON'S MANSION.

THEIR ANNUAL MEETING RECENTLY HELD—IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PLACE AND ADDITIONS TO THE RELICS.

Washington, May 26 (Special)—Mount Vernon is at all times the Mecca for daily pilgrims to the home of Washington. But once a year it is something more—when the Regents hold their annual council, and a pleasant little bustle pervades the stately old mansion. The Council for the present year closed its sessions last week. The Regents always come to Mount Vernon in May, which, in this latitude, is a Northern June. To a Regent amid such quiet, lonely surroundings would seem to mean more of delightful recreation than anything like matter-of-fact business proceedings. But one has only to look in to the Council-room to feel that a good deal of business is accomplished, nevertheless. The sessions of the Council are held in the "banquet hall," the largest and finest room in the house.

There was an unusually full Council this year, twenty-six in all—the Regent, Mrs. Justine Van Rosseelar Townsend, of New-York, sitting at the head of the table. Among the vice-regents were the three recently elected—Mrs. Clarkson, wife of Bishop Clarkson; Mrs. William Ames, of Rhode Island; and Miss Amy Townsend, of New-York, who takes the place of Mrs. Philip Schuyler, resigned. Among older vice-regents present were Miss Alice Longfellow, of Cambridge, Mass., daughter of the poet; Mrs. Ella B. Washington, of West Virginia; Mrs. Emma R. Hall, of Virginia, descendants of the Washington family; Mrs. Alice Hill, wife of ex-Senator Hill, of Colorado; Mrs. Letitia H. Walker, of North Carolina; Mrs. Susan E. Johnson Hudson, of Connecticut, the secretary of the Mount Vernon Association; Mrs. J. M. Ward, of Kansas; Miss Mary Lloyd Pendleton, of Ohio; Mrs. F. G. Baker, of Florida; Mrs. Elizabeth A. Rathbone, of Michigan; Mrs. Harriet Clayton Conney, of Delaware; Mrs. Rebecca B. Flindrau, of Minnesota; Mrs. A. Richardson, of Louisiana; Mrs. George R. Goldsborough, of Maryland, who is a great-great-granddaughter of Martha Washington; Mrs. Benjamin Graham, of Missouri; Mrs. Frances S. Conover, of New-Jersey; Miss Mary Park Yeatman, of Tennessee, descendant of President Polk.

The Regents are quartered at Mount Vernon, and though living in this ever-busy present, the bedrooms they occupy are, so far as it is possible to make them, reproductions of those of Mrs. Washington's day. The number of bedrooms in the mansion is not equal to the needs of the Council. They were long ago disposed of on the "first come, first served" plan, to the earlier vice-regents, by whom they were furnished, either from private means, or by the States they represented and for which they are named. As the number of vice-regents increased, there were not rooms enough to go around, and some found quarters outside, "restoration" has preserved the smaller buildings, and at the same time affords comfortable bedrooms. Through the vice-regent for Minnesota, the school children of St. Paul have restored the old "spinning house," which is made available for the Minnesota State bedroom and the Michigan State bedroom, leaving intact for the inspection of visitors the spinning-room. The vice-regent for Ohio was also furnished a room here, "to be used forever by the vice-regents for Ohio." Other vice-regents have fitted up the quiet little rooms over the old "servants' quarters" restored three years ago, and put in beautiful order, by the school children of Kansas, through the vice-regent of that State. When Mrs. Alexander Mitchell, vice-regent for Wisconsin, is with the Council, her room is the south bedroom at the top of the mansion, where the little dormer window stands out, a conspicuous feature of the roof. It is the room where Martha Washington died.

The vice-regent for Michigan has restored the old "coachhouse," and it is Washington's coach, the original, found at last, after a long and, toward the end, somewhat exciting search for it. Among other relics recently added is the silver centerpiece used at state dinners by General and Mrs. Washington, who commissioned Governor Morris to buy it in Paris. This comes back to Mount Vernon through the vice-regent for Maryland. From the vice-regent for Louisiana come valuable articles which belonged to Mrs. Washington, now returned after an absence of a century or more—among them a pair of curious silver lamps from the Conrad family of Virginia, great-grandsons of Nelly Custis. These and other relics from the same source form the "Conrad cabinet."

A few new old things in the library is the copy of a letter written by Martha Washington in 1834, while in Philadelphia, to her Fanny Washington.

There is also a curious profile of Washington done in black silk embroidery, on white silk background by Rowland Sharpless, daughter of James Sharpless, who painted in pastel from life a portrait of Washington.

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